

Federal Funding For Route 611 Water System (January 31, 2005)

Clintwood, Virginia

I am pleased today to visit Dickenson County for the purpose of announcing federal awards totaling \$2,244,800 for the construction of a public water system to serve residents along State Route 611 located approximately 4 miles north of the Town of Clintwood.

Effective today, at my request, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Agency is providing a federal grant in the amount of \$1,683,600 and a low interest loan of \$561,200 to the Dickenson County Public Service Authority (PSA) for the construction of the water system.

Total cost of the project is \$3,744,800. In addition to the federal funding I am announcing today, an application is pending with the Appalachian Regional Commission for a grant in the amount of \$500,000 for the project. I am now seeking final approval of that request, and I anticipate a favorable decision in the very near future. The Dickenson County PSA will also be applying in coming months for a \$1 million U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development Community Development Block Grant. I will be urging the rapid approval of the PSA's request. When secured, the HUD grant will complete the funding package needed to finalize the project.

One of my primary goals in representing Southwest Virginia is to work with our local governments to obtain federal funding for our region's water and wastewater facilities. The construction of this infrastructure is an essential step in our efforts to attract new employers who will provide a larger range of job opportunities to Ninth District residents and to improve the quality of life for Southwest Virginians.

The funding I am announcing today will further this goal by financing the construction of a public water system that will serve 206 households. The project will connect two previous federally funded water projects; Blowing Rock and Brush Creek. For the new project, 115,000 feet of water lines will be installed. In addition, a new pump station and a 200,000 gallon water storage tank will be constructed. The project will allow the Town of Clintwood, on behalf of the Dickenson County PSA, to directly transport water from the John Flannagan Water Authority to the local residents along Route 611. The construction of the system will enhance the economic and residential development potential in the communities receiving the service.

I want to commend Ron Phillips, Executive Director of the Dickenson County Public Service Authority, Damon Rasnick, the Chair of the PSA, and other Members of the Authority, all of whom deserve recognition for their effective work in aid of this project.

I want to thank the leadership of the Town of Clintwood, Mayor Don Baker, and the town council members. I also want to recognize the Dickenson County Board of Supervisors, including Scott Stanley and Paul Buchanan in whose districts the project will be built, Brian O'Quinn, Chairman of the Board, and Keith Viers, the County Administrator, for the tireless work they have preformed on this project.

Thanks are also due to Jeff Owen, Andy Chafin and the excellent staff at the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission. Additional acknowledgment is warranted for Lemon Kendrick, the Project Engineer, Jimmy Blaine Mullins who obtained the community user agreements, and Sally Hamer the Area Manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Office.

Finally, I want to commend my Deputy District Director, Laura Lee, for her persistence and persuasiveness in working to obtain the federal funding which we are announcing today.

The project which is receiving funding is an example of what can be achieved when citizens and government officials at the local and federal levels work together and cooperate in aid of a common purpose. For that cooperation and successful work, I want to commend all here and offer special congratulations to the residents who will be receiving this service.